Rather embarrassed by the quotation Peguy makes of a sentence from *Isabelle* in his *Uyst&re des Saints Innocents™* He takes the sentence and sets it in italics, but nothing indicates that it is a quotation. He counts none the less on my gratitude. But I don't know what to say to him; and, in my uncertainty, say nothing.

Anything that turns (or even *can turn)* into a device becomes hateful to me. As soon as the emotion decreases, the pen should stop; when it continues to run on just the same (and it only runs on the more easily), writing becomes detestable. Whole pages of this most recent Peguy^ and groups of pages, he could have had written by a secretary; they cease to be *really animated;* they imitate the good ones, those in which the emotion *demanded* this intellectual stuttering.

The craft I wish, may it be so discreetly original, so mysterious, so hidden, that it can never be seized in itself! I should like no one to be aware of me save by the perfection of my sentence and, because of that alone, no one able to imitate it.

I intend to prevent its ever being said of anyone that he is imitating me or that he resembles me (or else that it should be for a very fundamental reason), as it can be currently said today of this or that one: he is indulging in a little Francis Jammes or a little Henri de Itegnier, and as it will be said tomorrow: a little Peguy. I don't want to have any *manner* — but that which my subject demands. (What is needed here is the English *but).* Amen.

Written on 8 May

I did not go to Tunis. Met Mme Mayrisch at Marseille. Let the Monday boat leave without me; slept in Toulon; then to Cannes, where I found Valery Larbaud and Arnold Bennett (the latter, installed at the Californie, earns around a thousand francs a day; he is paid at the rate of a shilling a word; he writes without stopping every day from six a.m. to nine a.m., then gets into his bath and doesn't think of

his work again until the next morning). Through fear of bad weather and through impatience, I drop Tunisia and head for Florence, where, the very day of my arrival, I manage to get settled at 20 Lungarno Acciaioli in a very pleasant bedroom and sitting-room *(primo piano* on the quay) at three lire a day. I was still so tired and reduced to so little that Vannicok and Papini, whom I saw in the very first days, wondered what I had been suffering from (they have told me this since). I was able to get back to work and to myself only after a week of constant efforts. Nevertheless, little by little, work won me back and I was able to bring my book to the point I had hoped to reach in Italy. Neither churches nor museums (ex-

[19] *The Mystery of the Holy Innocent,* by Charles Peguy, a bag poem of religious inspiration, appeared in 1912.